

January 28, 2004

Summary

On January 28, 2004 at approximately 5:00 p.m., a 42-year-old forklift operator was killed when the forklift he was using went off the edge (side) of a loading dock ramp.

The victim was experienced having worked for his employer as a forklift operator for about 13 years. The forklift was an electric three-wheeled model and was being used on a wood loading dock ramp that was 11 feet 4 inches in length and 13 feet 1 inch wide. The ramp was on a 6-degree slope, exposed to the weather with snow present.

The victim was loading a railcar that was not positioned properly to the dock plate to allow the forklift operator to load the railcar without getting near the edge of the loading dock. When the victim tried to reposition the forklift into a new position to side shift the pallet he had just put in the railroad car into place, the tires on the right side of the forklift went off the edge on the north side of the loading ramp. No shear rail was provided on the side of the loading ramp. The forklift tipped off the ramp unto its right side ejecting the victim forward and to the right causing him to be caught between the mast and the roll cage where he died of asphyxia. The victim was not wearing the seat belt that was provided on the forklift.

Requirement/Recommendations

- The employee was not wearing a seat belt while operating the forklift. Seatbelts (restraint devices) are required to be worn when provided. WAC 296-24-23027(15)
- Sufficient safe clearances shall be allowed at loading docks and kept clear. WAC 296-24-21501
- No shear rail was present on the side of the ramp.